PLANET COMICS
PLANET
COMICS
No. 64
SPRING
10c
THE LOST WORLD
FIGHTS ON-
"MONSTERS FROM THE BLUE"
STAR PIRATE
SPACE RANGERS
FUTURA
ALL IN THIS ISSUE —

Look for the BULL'S-EYE!

A FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINE

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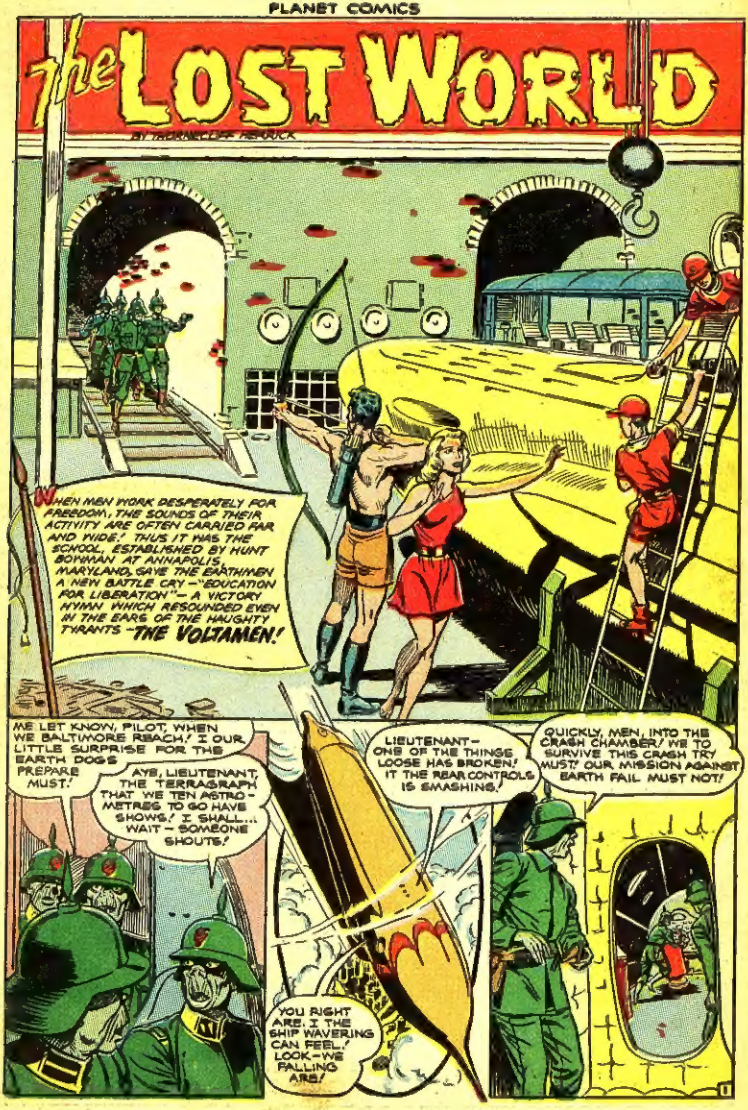
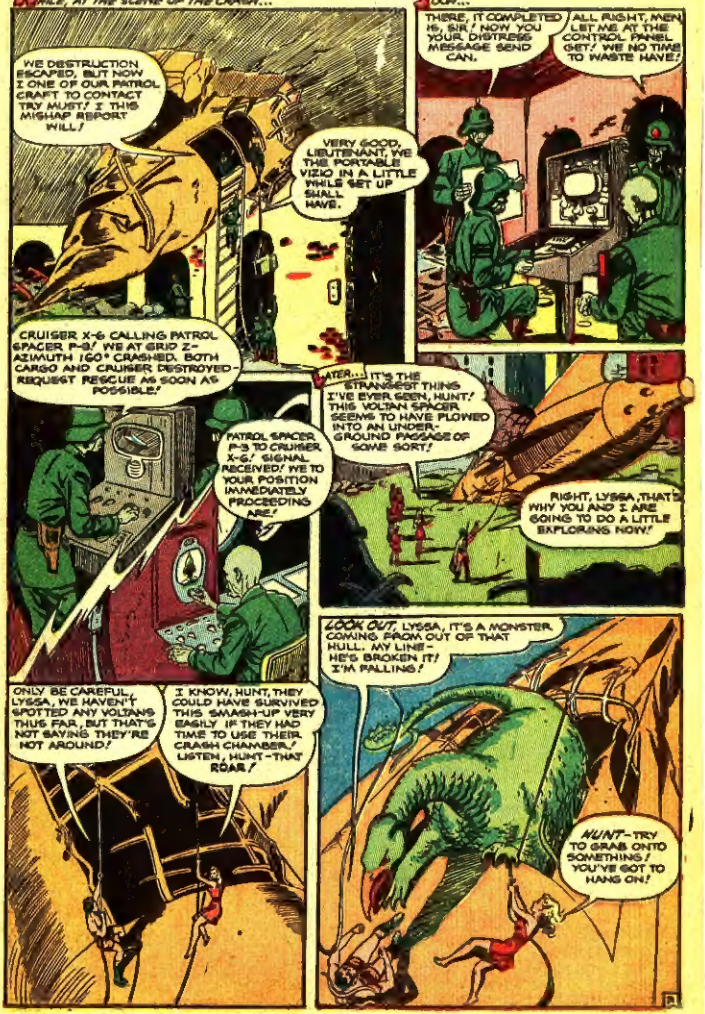
The LOST WORLD

BY THORNE CLAY HERWICK


WHEN MEN WORK DESPERATELY FOR FREEDOM, THE SOUNDS OF THEIR ACTIVITY ARE OFTEN CARRIED FAR AND WIDE! THUS IT WAS THE SCHOOL, ESTABLISHED BY HUNT BOWMAN AT ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND, GAVE THE EARTHMEN A NEW BATTLE CRY—"EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION"—A VICTORY HYMN WHICH RESOUNDED EVEN IN THE EARS OF THE HAUGHTY TYRANTS—THE VOLTAMEN!
ME LET KNOW, PILOT, WHEN WE BALTIMORE REACH! OUR LITTLE SURPRISE FOR THE EARTH DOGS PREPARE MUST!
AYE, LIEUTENANT, THE TERRAGRAPH THAT WE TEN ASTRO-METRES TO GO HAVE SHOWS! I SHALL... WAIT—SOMEONE SHOUTS!
LIEUTENANT—ONE OF THE THINGS LOOSE HAS BROKEN! IT THE REAR CONTROLS IS SMASHING!
YOU RIGHT ARE, I THE SHIP WAVERING CAN FEEL! LOOK—WE FALLING ARE!
QUICKLY, MEN, INTO THE CRASH CHAMBER! WE TO SURVIVE THIS CRASH TRY MUST! OUR MISSION AGAINST EARTH FAIL MUST NOT!

MEANWHILE, AT ANNAPOLIS...
GO RIGHT AHEAD, PROFESSOR BOWMAN, START DELIVERING YOUR LECTURE ON THAT CAPTURED RAY GUN.
THANKS FOR THE COMPLIMENT, LYSSA, I WILL.' ALL RIGHT, BOYS, TODAY WE'RE GOING TO SHOW YOU THE POWER OF THIS RAY AGAINST A METALLIC TARGET.
THE TARGET HUNT IS PREPARING TO, BOY'S, IS THAT OLD TANK OUT THERE.'
RIGHT-AND RATHER THAN BORE YOU WITH SILLY WORDS I THINK I'LL HAVE LYSSA SHOW YOU ITS FIREPOWER.
GOOD IDEA, HUNT, YOU CAN GO INTO THE SCIENTIFIC DETAILS LATER.' OKAY, STUDENTS, JUST STAND BACK-AWAY FROM THE MUZZLE OF THE GUN.'
YES, MISS LYSSA, BUT LOOK UP THERE IN THE SKY.'
GREAT SCOTT, IT'S A VOLTAN SPACER, HUNT, HEADED RIGHT FOR THE SCHOOL.' I'M GOING TO BLAST IT.'
DON'T BE A FOOL, LYSSA, YOU KNOW THAT RAY IS USELESS AGAINST A VOLTAN SPACER.'
YES, YES, BUT WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING. WE CAN'T JUST STAND HERE LIKE CLAY PIGEONS.'
YOU DON'T HAVE TO, LYSSA.' COME ON, LET'S ALL GET DOWN OUT OF SIGHT.' MAYBE IT WON'T SPOT US.'
HURRY, MR. BOWMAN, IT'S COMING CLOSER AND CLOSER.'
THEN, AS THE STRICKEN VOLTAN SPACE SHIP TWISTS GROTESQUELY TOWARD THE GROUND, A SHATTERING BLAST RILLS THE AIR...
LOOK-IT SMASHED INTO THE EARTH NEAR OUR TANK TARGET.' COME ON, LET'S TAKE A LOOK AND SEE WHAT HAPPENED.'
WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND YOU, HUNT.' OKAY, BOYS, FOLLOW ME AND STAY CLOSE TOGETHER.' WE MAY RUN INTO SOME TROUBLE.'


WHILE, AT THE SCENE OF THE CRASH...
WE DIESTRUCTION ESCAPED, BUT NOW I ONE OF OUR PATROL CRAFT TO CONTACT TRY MUST! I THIS MISHAP REPORT WILL!
VERY GOOD, LIEUTENANT, WE THE PORTABLE VIZIO IN A LITTLE WHILE SET UP SHALL HAVE.
CRUISER X-6 CALLING PATROL SPACER P-3! WE AT GRID Z-AZIMUTH 160° CRASHED. BOTH CARGO AND CRUISER DESTROYED - REQUEST RESCUE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
PATROL SPACER P-3 TO CRUISER X-6! SIGNAL RECEIVED! WE TO YOUR POSITION IMMEDIATELY PROCEEDING ARE!
ONLY BE CAREFUL, LYSSA, WE HAVEN'T SPOTTED ANY VOLTANS THUS FAR, BUT THAT'S NOT SAYING THEY'RE NOT AROUND!
I KNOW, HUNT, THEY COULD HAVE SURVIVED THIS SMASH-UP VERY EASILY IF THEY HAD TIME TO USE THEIR CRASH CHAMBER. LISTEN, HUNT - THAT ROAR!
SOON...
THERE, IT COMPLETED IS, SIR. NOW YOU YOUR DISTRESS MESSAGE SEND CAN.
ALL RIGHT, MEN, LET ME AT THE CONTROL PANEL, GET! WE NO TIME TO WASTE HAVE!
LATER... IT'S THE STRANGEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN, HUNT! THIS VOLTAN SPACER SEEMS TO HAVE PLOWED INTO AN UNDER-GROUND PASSAGE OF SOME SORT!
RIGHT, LYSSA, THAT'S WHY YOU AND I ARE GOING TO DO A LITTLE EXPLORING NOW!
LOOK OUT, LYSSA, IT'S A MONSTER COMING FROM OUT OF THAT HULL. MY LINE - HE'S BROKEN IT! I'M FALLING!
HUNT - TRY TO GRAB ONTO SOMETHING! YOU'VE GOT TO HANG ON!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, LYSSA, I DIDN'T FALL VERY FAR! HOW ABOUT YOU? CAN'T YOU LET YOURSELF DOWN OUT OF HIS REACH?
NO, HUNT, THE ROPE IS SNARLED AROUND HIS LEG! EVERY TIME HE MOVES I'M PULLED BACK UP! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME...
...ONLY HURRY, HUNT, HE'S STARTING TO MOVE TOWARD ME! IF HE COMES ANY CLOSER I'M GOING TO LET GO!
NO, LYSSA, NO... YOU'LL BE KILLED! GET AS FAR BACK FROM HIM AS POSSIBLE! I'LL DO THE REST...
...I HOPE! I'VE GOT TO TAKE A CHANCE ON A LONG SHOT! IF I MISS, LYSSA'S A GONER!
THAT'S IT, LYSSA, KEEP INCHING AWAY FROM HIM! NOW— WHILE HIS HEAD IS MOTIONLESS!
PLEASE, HUNT, DO SOMETHING! I CAN'T STAND THIS ANY LONGER!
YIPPEE, MR. BOWMAN DID IT! HE GOT THE BEAST RIGHT IN THE HEAD!
OH, BOY, WHAT A SHOT! LOOK, THE BRUTE IS STARTING TO KEEL OVER!
GREAT SCOTT, HUNT, I WAS NEVER SO FRIGHTENED IN ALL MY LIFE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU!
DON'T THINK ABOUT IT ANYMORE, LYSSA! THE MAIN THING IS THAT YOU'RE STILL ALIVE!
YOU'RE STILL TREMBLING, LYSSA! DO YOU FEEL STRONG ENOUGH TO GO ON WITH OUR SEARCH?
YES, I-I'LL BE ALL RIGHT! COME ON, LET'S GET THE KIDS DOWN AND SEE WHAT WE'VE RUN INTO DOWN HERE!
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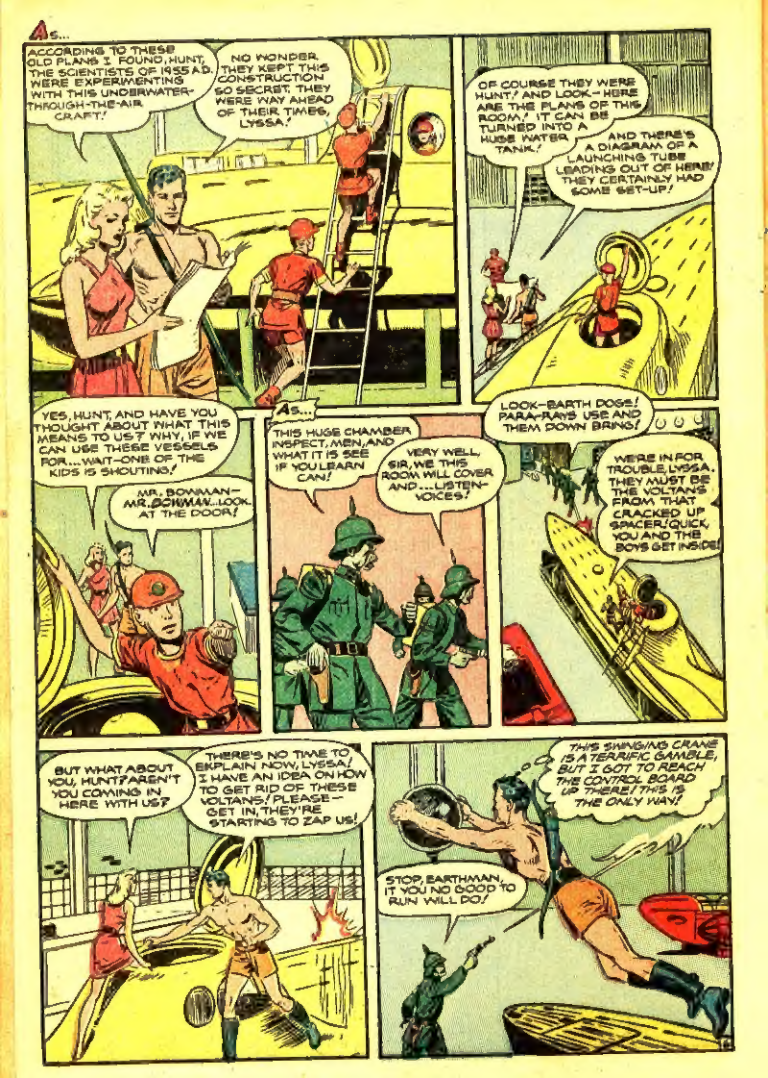
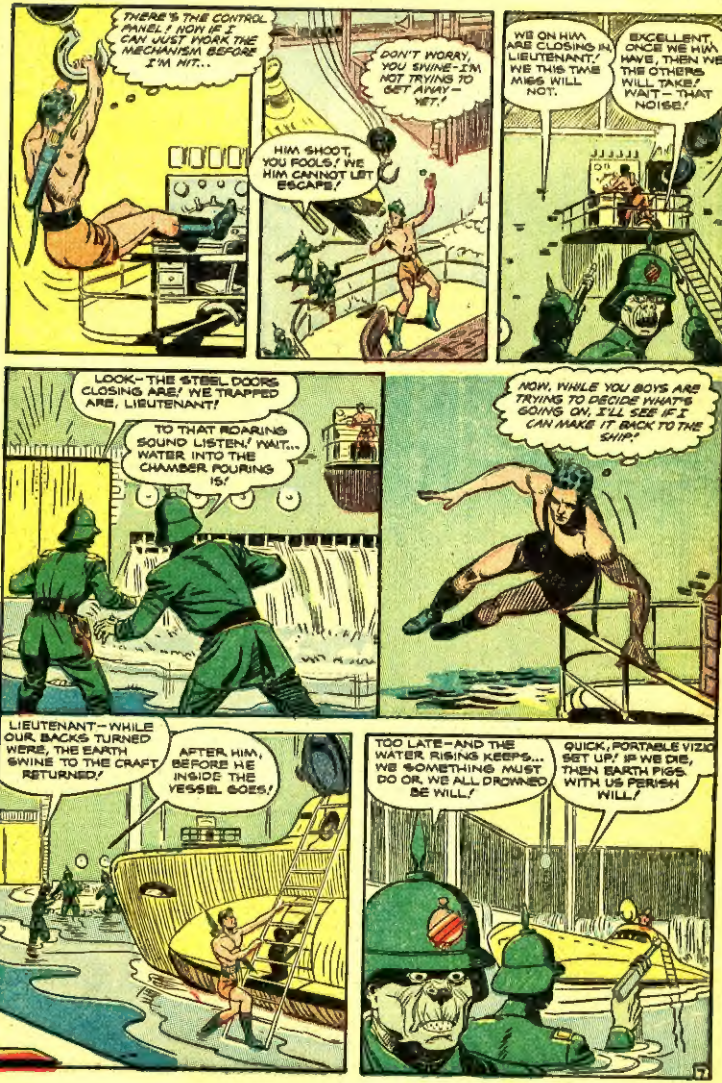
ONLY EMOTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN AROUSED BY THE SCALY MONSTER BEGIN TO COOL, AS HUNT AND LYSSA GUIDE THEIR SMALL GROUP THROUGH A WEIRD WORLD OF UNDERGROUND TUNNELS. USING A SMALL ELECTRIC VEHICLE THEY FOUND IN THE SUBTERRANEAN PASSAGE, THE LITTLE BAND OF EXPLORERS DRIVE CAUTIOUSLY ALONG MILES OF ENDLESS TRACK, UNTIL...
LOOK, HUNT, THE TRACKS END UNDER THOSE STEEL DOORS. I WONDER WHAT'S BEHIND THEM?
I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST IDEA, LYSSA, BUT WE'LL SOON FIND OUT. I'VE BEEN PUZZLED EVER SINCE WE CAME DOWN HERE.
KEEP OUT!
DANGER
SO HAVE I, HUNT, BUT THE NEAREST I CAN FIGURE IT, THIS MUST HAVE BEEN A SECRET WORKPLACE OF SOME SORT.
YOU'RE RIGHT, LYSSA! AT LEAST, SOME OF THESE SIGNS I'VE READ SEEM TO INDICATE... WAIT—LOOK AT THAT!
IT'S A SWITCHBOARD, PROBABLY FOR OPERATING THESE DOORS! YES—HERE IT IS. I'LL PULL IT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!
I ONLY HOPE WE DON'T RUN INTO ANY MORE SURPRISES LIKE THAT MONSTER!
LOOK, LYSSA, YOU HIT IT RIGHT ON THE NOSE! THIS IS A LABORATORY! I WONDER WHAT THOSE STRANGE-LOOKING SHIPS ARE?
PROBABLY SOME-THING SCIENTISTS WERE WORKING ON BEFORE THE VOLTAN INVASION. COME ON, LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND!
S NEARBY...
THIS SEARCH FUTILE TO BE SEEMS! NOTHING OF VALUE HAVE WE IN THESE PASSAGES YET FOUND. MAYBE WE BETTER BACK GO AND FOR RESCUE SHIP WAIT!
LOOK, LIEUTENANT, HERE ANOTHER PASSAGE WITH TRACKS IN IT IS!
AND THERE ODD GROUND CAR NEAR THOSE LARGE STEEL DOORS STANDS!
ME FOLLOW, MEN, MAYBE NOW WE FIND OUT WILL WHAT THE EARTHLINGS THIS UNDERGROUND PLACE USED FOR!


As...
ACCORDING TO THESE OLD PLANS I FOUND, HUNT, THE SCIENTISTS OF 1955 A.D. WERE EXPERIMENTING WITH THIS UNDERWATER-THROUGH-THE-AIR CRAFT!
NO WONDER THEY KEPT THIS CONSTRUCTION SO SECRET. THEY WERE WAY AHEAD OF THEIR TIMES, LYSSA!
OF COURSE THEY WERE HUNT! AND LOOK—HERE ARE THE PLANS OF THIS ROOM! IT CAN BE TURNED INTO A HUGE WATER TANK!
AND THERE'S A DIAGRAM OF A LAUNCHING TUBE LEADING OUT OF HERE! THEY CERTAINLY HAD SOME SET-UP!
YES, HUNT, AND HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT THIS MEANS TO US? WHY, IF WE CAN USE THESE VESSELS FOR...WHAT-ONE OF THE KIDS IS SHOUTING!
MR. BOWMAN—MR. BOHMAN—LOOK AT THE DOOR!
As...
THIS HUGE CHAMBER INSPECT, MEN, AND WHAT IT IS SEE IF YOU LEARN CAN!
VERY WELL, SIR, WE THIS ROOM WILL COVER AND...LISTEN-VOICES!
LOOK—EARTH DOGS! PARA-RAYS USE AND THEM DOWN BRING!
WE'RE IN FOR TROUBLE, LYSSA. THEY MUST BE THE VOLTANS FROM THAT CRACKED UP SPACER! QUICK, YOU AND THE BOYS GET INSIDE!
BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, HUNT? AREN'T YOU COMING IN HERE WITH US?
THERE'S NO TIME TO EXPLAIN NOW, LYSSA! I HAVE AN IDEA ON HOW TO GET RID OF THESE VOLTANS! PLEASE—GET IN, THEY'RE STARTING TO ZAP US!
THIS SWINGING CRANE IS A TERRIFIC GAMBLE, BUT I GOT TO REACH THE CONTROL BOARD UP THERE! THIS IS THE ONLY WAY!
STOP, EARTHMAN, IT YOU NO GOOD TO RUN WILL DO!


THERE'S THE CONTROL PANEL! NOW IF I CAN JUST HOAK THE MECHANISM BEFORE I'M HIT...
DON'T WORRY, YOU SHINE-I'M NOT TRYING TO GET AWAY— YET.!
HIM SHOOT, YOU FOOLS! WE HIM CANNOT LET ESCAPE!
WE ON HIM ARE CLOSING IN, LIEUTENANT! WE THIS TIME MISS WILL NOT!
EXCELLENT. ONCE WE HIM HAVE, THEN WE THE OTHERS WILL TAKE! WAIT— THAT NOISE!
LOOK— THE STEEL DOORS CLOSING ARE! WE TRAPPED ARE, LIEUTENANT!
TO THAT ROARING SOUND LISTEN! WAIT... WATER INTO THE CHAMBER POURING IS!
NOW, WHILE YOU BOYS ARE TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT'S GOING ON, I'LL SEE IF I CAN MAKE IT BACK TO THE SHIP!
LIEUTENANT— WHILE OUR BACKS TURNED WERE, THE EARTH SWINE TO THE CRAFT RETURNED!
AFTER HIM, BEFORE HE INSIDE THE VESSEL GOES!
TOO LATE— AND THE WATER RISING KEEPS... WE SOMETHING MUST DO OR, WE ALL DROWNED BE WILL!
QUICK; PORTABLE VIZI SET UP! IF WE DIE, THEN EARTH PIGS WITH US PERISH WILL!

HERE IT IS, LIEUTENANT- WHERE I IT PLACE SHALL?
HASTE MAKE, HERE ON WORK BENCH IT PUT.' IF WE ON THIS STAND, WATER US RIGHT AWAY REACH WILL NOT.'
OUR RESCUE SHIP BY THIS TIME NEAR HERE MUST BE.' I THEM WILL CONTACT.' WHAT - THE VIZIO POWER LESS IS.'
LIEUTENANT- THE WATER DEEPER GETTING IS.'
SOON, THE RISING WATERS COMPLETELY FILL THE CHAMBER, CLOSING OVER THE STRUGGLING FIGURES OF THE TRAPPED VOLTANS!
MEANWHILE...
THAT WAS CERTAINLY A CLOSE SQUEAK WITH THOSE VOLTANS, LYSSA, BUT NOW ALL WE HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IS GETTING THIS CRAFT OUT OF THE WORKSHOP!
THAT SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT, HUNT.' AFTER ALL, WE STILL HAVE THE PLANS.' KEEP BEARING TO YOUR LEFT.
LOOK - THERE IT IS.' WHAT DO WE DO NOW, LYSSA?
IT SAYS HERE THAT AS SOON AS THE TUBE IS REACHED, FULL POWER SHOULD BE APPLIED WELL, HOLD ON, HUNT.' HERE GOES.'
THIS SHIP HAS MARVELOUS SPEED LYSSA.' LOOK - WE'RE BREAKING WATER.'
WHY, THIS IS THE SEVERN RIVER! WE MUST BE RIGHT NEAR THE SCHOOL!
GEE, WE SURE ARE, MISS LYSSA.' WHY, THOSE ARE OUR BUILDINGS DOWN THERE TO THE RIGHT!
SO THEY ARE, SON, BUT WAIT - WHAT'S THAT ABOVE US?
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AS ABOVE...
COMMANDER, WE IN THE AREA WHERE THE CRUSIER CRASHED ARE BUT LOCAL STRANDS CRAFT FROM WATRA RISES!
IT ONE OF OUR CRAFTS IS NOT! TO THE EARTHLINGS IT BELONGS! MUST QUICKLY PLOT OUR SHIP INTO DIVE PUT AND IT TO BLAST FREIGHT!
DISINTEGRA-RAY READY TO FIRE IS? THERE, IT THE STRONGEST CHARGE RELEASED HAVE!
BUT SOMETHING WRONG IS PLOT! THE HULL OF UNIDENTIFIED SHIP OUR RAY WITHSTANDS! WE MAIN TRY MUST!
WHAT - THE OTHER SHIP TOWARD US ZOOMS! JETS REVERSE - WE THEM OUT MANEUVER MUST!
AS INSIDE HUNT'S SPACER...
I DON'T KNOW HOW THOSE OLD SCIENTISTS TREATED FRIGHT THE METAL ON THIS SHIP, BUT IT CERTAINLY SAVED OUR LIVES!
GOING TOO SEE WHETHER THIS MAGNA-SOUND GUN IS AS GOOD AS THE SHIP ITSELF!
LOOK - THE VOLTANS ARE TRYING TO GET OUT OF OUR LINE OF FIRE! STABILIZE OUR FLIGHT HUNT... STEADY - NOW!
IT WORKED! - THE HIGH FREQUENCY SHATTERED THEIR HULL!
NICE GOING, LYSSA THEY PROBABLY NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT THEM! HOLD ON NOW - I'M GOING TO TAKE THIS SHIP DOWN!
LATER...
WE REALLY HAVE SOMETHING THIS TIME, LYSSA - A REAL WEAPON TO USE AGAINST THE VOLTANS.
BETTER STILL, HUNT, WE HAVE THE PLANS TO BUILD OTHERS OF ITS KIND! AND HOW WE USE THEM IS REALLY GOING TO DECIDE OUR FUTURE!

Life on other Worlds

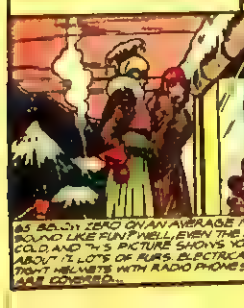
MARS

MARS HAS NO OCEANS — IT'S ONLY WATER LIES FROZEN IN THIN POLAR ICE CAPS WHICH MELT IN SUMMER AND FORM CANALS AND A NETWORK OF DEEP CANALS TO THE CITIES, WHERE THE MARTIANS STORE IT IN TANKS...

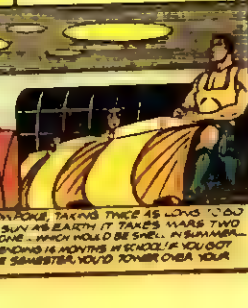
TWO MOONS, PHOBOS AND DEIMOS—GLOW IN THE SKY OF THE RED WORLD. THEIR PROGRESS IS VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE!
PERHAPS THE MARTIAN GIRL IS TELLING HER SUITOR "LAN, YOU'RE JUST MOONSTRUCK!"

BECAUSE THERE IS LESS GRAVITY THAN ON EARTH... THE MARTIANS ARE A HUGE MUSCULAR RACE WITH GREAT LUNGS TO ABSORB THE THIN AIR... AN EARTHMAN WOULD BE DWARFED BY A MARTIAN CHILD, BUT COULD OUTRUN HIM WITH TIRELESS SPEED!

THE MARTIANS ARE EXCELLENT ATHLETES... EVERY CANALCITY HAS A HUGE STADIUM EQUIPPED FOR EVERY TYPE OF SPORT! THERE ARE NO SPECTATOR GAMES.... EVERYONE PARTICIPATES!

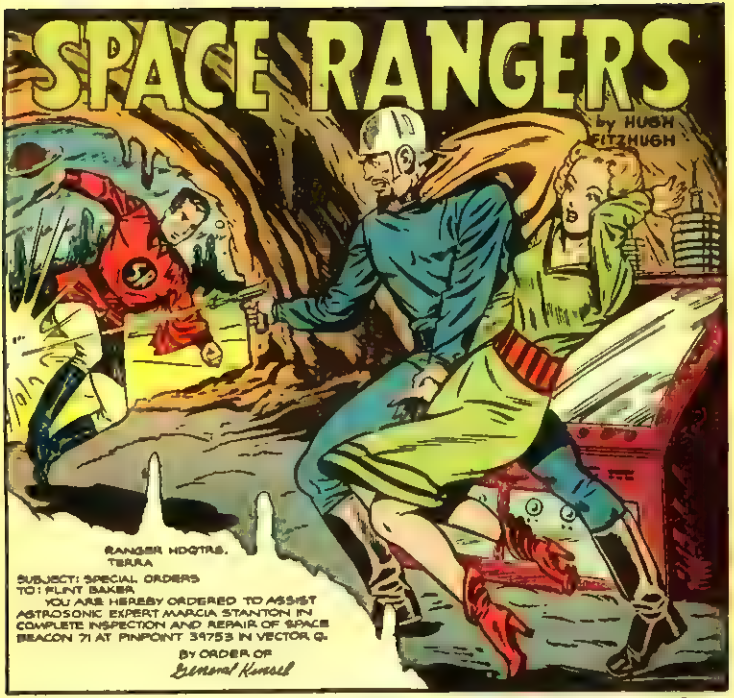

AS SOON AS ZERO ON AN AVERAGE MOVIE WEEK DAY! SOUND LIKE FUN? WELL, EVEN THE MARTIANS GET COLD, AND THIS PICTURE SHOWS YOU WHAT THEY DO ABOUT IT. LOTS OF RUGS, ELECTRICALLY HEATED... THEY WEAR HELMETS WITH RADIO PHONES, FOR THE EARS ARE COVERED...

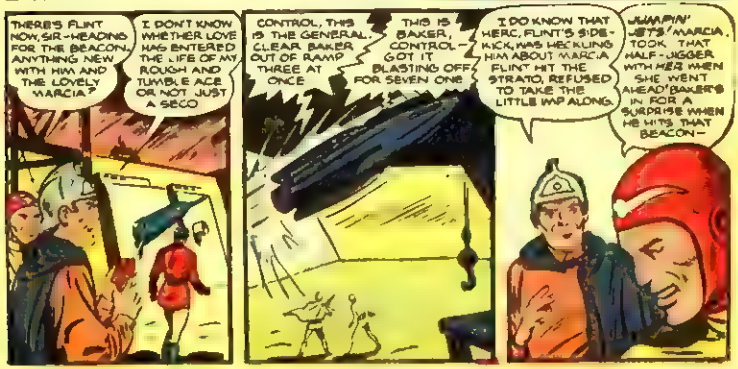
SUPER ATOM-HEAT JACKETS
1999 MODEL ROCKET RAY HEATERS
MARS IS A SLOW POKE, TAKING THREE AS LONG TO GO AROUND THE SUN AS EARTH. IT TAKES MARS TWO YEARS TO OUR ONE... WHICH WOULD BE SWELL IN SUMMER... IMAGINE SPENDING 16 MONTHS IN SCHOOL! IF YOU GOT LEFT BEHIND ONE SEMESTER, YOU'D TOWER OVER YOUR CLASSMATES!



SPACE RANGERS

by HUGH FITZHUGH

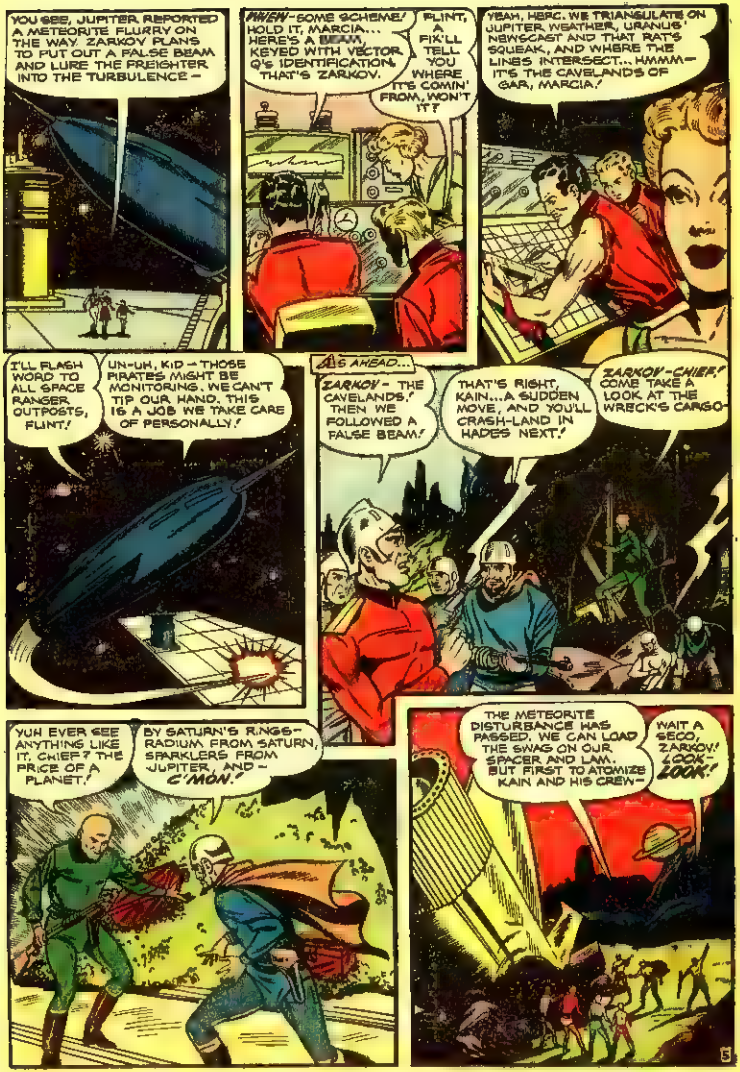

RANGER HDQTRS.
TERRA
SUBJECT: SPECIAL ORDERS
TO: FLINT BAKER
YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED TO ASSIST ASTROSONIC EXPERT MARCIA STANTON IN COMPLETE INSPECTION AND REPAIR OF SPACE BEACON 71 AT PINPOINT 34753 IN VECTOR Q-
BY ORDER OF
General Kinsell


THERE'S FLINT NOW, SIR - HEADING FOR THE BEACON. ANYTHING NEW WITH HIM AND THE LOVELY MARCIA?
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER LOVE HAS ENTERED THE LIFE OF MY ROUGH AND TUMBLE ACE OR NOT JUST A SECO
CONTROL, THIS IS THE GENERAL. CLEAR BAKER OUT OF RAMP THREE AT ONCE
THIS IS BAKER, CONTROL - GOT IT BLASTING OFF FOR SEVEN ONE
I DO KNOW THAT HERC, FLINT'S SIDEKICK, WAS HECKLING HIM ABOUT MARCIA FLINT HIT THE STRATO, REFUSED TO TAKE THE LITTLE WAP ALONG.
JUMPIN' JETS! MARCIA TOOK THAT HALF-JIGGER WITH HER WHEN SHE WENT AHEAD! BAKER'S IN FOR A SURPRISE WHEN HE HITS THAT BEACON -

LATER...
...MAYBE I WAS TOO TOUGH ON "HAC" BUT THE GENERAL'S GOT ME SORE... PUTTING ME ON THIS DETAIL WITH MARCIA... HE'S ABOUT AS SUBTLE AS A RAY IN THE RIBS... THE OLD GOAT--
...HE THINKS I SHOULD SETTLE DOWN.. FORGET ABOUT SPACE PIRATES... AW--THERE'S THE BEACON...NOW TO CUT TURBO-JETS AND GLIDE IN...
HEY MARCIA! I DIDN'T EXPECT A RED ROCKET WELCOME BUT--HERE'S THE NEW TRANSCEIVER YOU ORDERED LADY!
AND INSIDE THE TOWER ROOM, WAITING, READY...
A PITY THE LADY IS NOT AT LIBERTY TO WELCOME THE GALLANT SPACE RANGER, EH LORAN?
AYE ZARKOV--I'S MUST DO THE HONORS FOR HER. HE ENTERS--
SATURN'S RINGS--THE PLACE A SHAMBLES! MARCIA, AND HERE! HOW THE DEUCE DID YOU GET HERE? BLASTERS--THEY'RE BOUND WITH PLASTICINE, AND LISTEN! WHAT WAS THAT?
WELCOME, RANGER! A LONG TIME SINCE YOU SAW ME BANISHED TO THE BLACK BELT FOR PIRACY EH? BUT PERHAPS I SHOULD LET THIS DIS-GUN SPEAK FOR ME--THERE!
AGAIN THE MERCILESS RAY LANCES OUT! A PAIN-WRACKED FIGURE REELS, STAGGERS BLINDLY...
OOOH--MY THROAT.. EYES! THEY'RE ON FIRE! YOU WIN ZARKOV YOU WIN!

MEANWHILE, FAR AWAY A MAMMOTH FREIGHTER KNIFES THE VOID, AND THE SKIPPER'S VOICE ECHOES A SLENDER CATWALK...
LOOK AT IT, MATE—A TWO MILLION CREDIT CARGO, AND OURS THE ONLY THE SHIP THEY'D TRUST TO GET IT THROUGH TO TERRA. WE'VE CAUSE TO BE PROUD—
YOU'VE CAUSE TO BE PROUD, CAPTAIN KAIN. BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT DRIFTING METEORITE FIELD JUPITER REPORTED? WORRIED?
AGAIN—WE WON'T COME WITHIN MILES OF IT IF WE STAY ON SEVEN ONE'S BEAM. WHAT'S THE WORD, MISTER—YOU KEEPIN' US ON THAT BEACON'S SIGNAL?
CAPN, I DIDN'T WANT TO WORRY YOU BEFORE... I FIGURED WE'D PICK IT UP SOON ENOUGH. BUT SEVEN ONE'S NOT ON THE AIR!
AS, IN THE BEACON'S CONTROL ROOM...
OH...FLINT—FLINT! HE'S DAZED—CAN'T SEE! AND THAT FIEND RAVED A SECTOR FROM THE TOWER'S WALL! FLINT! LOOK OUT!
THAT'S HIS END, LORAN—NO ONE COULD SURVIVE THAT FALL!
WE'D BETTER HURRY, ZARKOV—OUR SHIP'S WAITING BEHIND THE TOWER!
THAT'S ONE BEACON THAT'LL NEVER PUT OUT ANOTHER SIGNAL TO GUIDE FREIGHTERS, EH, MEN?
NOT AFTER THE JOB WE DID, ZARKOV. TELIO REPORTS THAT METEORITE FIELD MOVING TOWARD THE CAVELANDS OF GAR AS WE EXPECTED.
...NOW ALL WE'VE GOT TO DO IS SET OVER THERE AND PUT OUT A ZF TONE WITH VECTOR 9'S IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERS—
AND KAIN'S TWO MILLION CREDIT CARGO FLOWS INTO THE METEORITES AND DROPS INTO OUR LAP. HO-HO! IT'S ALMOST TOO EASY, LORAN!

THE CAVELANDS OF MAR... LATER, ZARKOV AND HIS MURDEROUS MINIONS GATHER 'NEATH THE STALACTITES OF AN EERIE CAVERN, TENSELY SCANNING THE VIZISCREEN AS THEIR DOOM-LURE FLASHES OUT THROUGH NATURE'S TURBULENCE HIGH ABOVE...
LOOK--LOOK! THAT'S KAINS SPACE FREIGHTER ALL RIGHT! HE'S ON OUR BEAM! QUICK, MORE AUDIO POWER SO WE CAN HEAR THOSE SWINE!
WE'RE IN THE METEORITES, PILOT! JUPITER'S ABOUT WAS HAYWIRE!
EITHER THAT OR THE BEACON'S A PHONY CAPTAIN--WE CAUGHT IT LATER THAN WE SHOULD HAVE! LOOK OUT, SIR--THERE'S ONE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR US! HARD OVER!
TOO LATE THE PILOT'S WARNING! AN EYE-SEARING FLASH OF LIGHT... THE SICKENING CRUNCH OF CRUMPLING METAL...
...AND BELOW, SHOUT OF GREED...
IT'S HEADING DOWN BEHIND ,THAT DEVIL'S HORN! HURRY--AND KEEP YOUR BLASTERS READY!
MEANWHILE AT THE SPACE BEACON IN VECTOR Q...
OOH--HEAD'S STILL SHIMMY-ING... LUCKY I WAS ON THE FRINGE OF THAT DISBLAST...GUESS THIS SET-BACK SAVED MY NECK-
MARCIA--HERC! THANK PROVIDENCE YOU'RE OKAY! WHERE D THAT SPACE-SCUM GET TO? JUST A SECO AND I'LL HAVE YOU OUT OF THAT PLASTICINE.
THERE--THIS XSOLVO S-SPRAY DOES THE TRICK! WHY'D ZARKOV KNOCK OFF THIS BEACON ANYWAY?
HE'S AFTER A VALUABLE CARGO THAT'S BOUND FOR TERRA FLINT. COME ON, LET'S HEAD FOR YOUR SHIP!


YOU SEE, JUPITER REPORTED A METEORITE FLURRY ON THE WAY. ZARKOV PLANS TO PUT OUT A FALSE BEAM AND LURE THE FREIGHTER INTO THE TURBULENCE—
HUH—SOME SCHEME! HOLD IT, MARCIA... HERE'S A BEAM, KEYED WITH VECTOR Q'S IDENTIFICATION. THAT'S ZARKOV.
FLINT, A FIX'LL TELL YOU WHERE IT'S COMIN' FROM, WON'T IT?
YEAH, HERC. WE TRIANGULATE ON JUPITER, WEATHER, URANUS' NEWSCAST AND THAT RAT'S SQUEAK, AND WHERE THE LINES INTERSECT... HMMM— IT'S THE CAVELANDS OF GAR, MARCIA!
I'LL FLASH WORD TO ALL SPACE RANGER OUTPOSTS, FLINT!
UH-UH, KID — THOSE PIRATES MIGHT BE MONITORING. WE CAN'T TIP OUR HAND. THIS IS A JOB WE TAKE CARE OF PERSONALLY!
AS AHEAD...
ZARKOV — THE CAVELANDS.' THEN WE FOLLOWED A FALSE BEAM!
THAT'S RIGHT, KAIN... A SUDDEN MOVE, AND YOU'LL CRASH-LAND IN HADES NEXT!
ZARKOV—CHIEF! COME TAKE A LOOK AT THE WRECK'S CARGO—
YUH EVER SEE ANYTHING LIKE IT, CHIEF? THE PRICE OF A PLANET!
BY SATURN'S RINGS— RADIUM FROM SATURN, SPARKLERS FROM JUPITER, AND— C'MON!
THE METEORITE DISTURBANCE WAS PASSED. WE CAN LOAD THE SWAG ON OUR SPACER AND LAM. BUT FIRST TO ATOMIZE KAIN AND HIS CREW—
WAIT A SECO, ZARKOV! LOOK, LOOK!
5

IT'S A RANGER SHIP, JORAN AND THAT MEANS JUST ONE THING - FLINT BAKER'S ALIVE!
DUCK FOR COVER, WHILE WE'VE GOT A CHANCE MEN QUICK, BEFORE THAT RANGER STARTS BLASTING!
THE FREIGHTER'S CREW DUCKED INTO A CAVERN FLINT! BUT THERE GOES ZARKOV'S GANG HEADING FOR THEIR SPACER!
OKAY, PAL - WHIP BACK ACROSS IT AND HOLD THIS BABY STEADY!
I'LL CUT LOOSE THE BIG ONE - AN ATO 7 BROADSIDE! THERE - ONE MORE OUGHT TO DO IT!
CURSE THAT BAKER - WHY DIDN'T I MAKE CERTAIN OF HIS DEATH BACK THERE? HE'S EXPLODED OUR SHIP!
AND WE'RE TRAPPED HERE IN THIS WILDERNESS! THE RANGER ROCKETS LANDING!
WHERE'D FLINT GET TO, HERC? - ZARKOV'S HEADING FOR THE CAVES!
YEAH MY BOY LIT OUT AFTER 'EM! LOOK OUT, FLINT - HE'S DRAWING A BIG GAT!
HE'LL NEVER GET A CHANCE TO USE IT, HERC! HERE'S WHERE WE TALK OVER A FEW THINGS, OLD PAL!
LATER
WELL, ZARKOV'S CHAINS AND HE'LL TAKE KAIN AND HIS CARGO ON TO TERRA. HOW ABOUT GETTING ME OFF THAT BEACON-REPAIR JOB, CUTIE?
YOU HAVEN'T A CHANCE, FLINT. MARCIA GOT THE GENERAL TO PUT YOU ON THAT DETAIL IN THE FIRST PLACE!

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WORLD TRAVEL LABELS

Star Pirate
By LEN DOBSON
COME ON!! COME ALONG TO THE UNIVERSAL FAIR! SEE AND HEAR THE SCIENTIFIC MARVELS OF THIS DAY AND AGE!" SO BLARED THE ANNOUNCEMENTS IN EVERY CITY, ON EVERY PLANET IN GARGATEA GALAXY SEVEN. BUT STAR PIRATE, ROBIN HOOD OF THE SPACEWAYS, WAS OFF ON QUITE A DIFFERENT MISSION, AS HE AND HIS SIDEKICK, BLACKY, PREPARED TO LEAVE THEIR JET SHIP IN MID-AIR...
THIS PROFESSOR TUREK'S A QUEER OLD EGG, BLACKY - BUT I LIKE THE GUY, AND SINCE I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HIM, I'D LIKE TO CHECK UP.
OKAY, STAR - QUIT YAPPIN' AND HURRY UP! I GOTTA DATE AT VENUS CAFE
IT CAN WAIT, FUZZY FACE! LOOK, THERE'S TUREK'S LAB JUST BELOW US.
I KIN SEE IT HEY! WON'T THAT SOME GADGET MOVING DOWN THERE?
AND SUDDENLY..
SNOOPERS! FIRE REDUCTO FORCE CHARGE!
GAH! WHO PUT THAT WALL IN MY WAY?

AS BELOW, IN THE PROFESSOR'S LAB...
GOOD WORK, MEN! OUR FORCE RAYS HAVE BLASTED A HOLE IN THE WALL, AND THEY'VE KNOCKED THE OLD GEEZER COLD! LOOK! THAT GLASS CASE...
WHAT IS IT, PILOT? WHAT'A WE WANT A WAX FIGURE FOR?
SILENCE, FOOL! THIS IS ONE OF TUREK'S NEWEST DISCOVERIES! GET IT INTO THE LAND TRUCK AT ONCE!
AND SWIFTLY...
I STILL DON'T GET WHAT THIS HAS TO DO WITH US?
YOU WILL SOON ENOUGH! IT'LL PUT AMALGAMATED ELECTRONICS ON THE MAP!
WE'LL COP THE FIRST PRIZE OF ONE MILLION CREDITS AT THE UNIVERSAL FAIR AND... AND? THOSE TWO GUYS — BLAST THEM!
INSTANTLY...
C'MON, BLACKY, WE CAN— OW! THEY SLAPPED US AGAIN WITH THAT FORCE RAY..
WHEN AFTER THE RAIDERS LEAVE...
S-STAR! BLACKY! W-WHAT'S HAPPENED? I...
TAKE IT EASY, PROF. THOSE MEN— WHAT D' THEY STEAL?
STEAL? OH YES, YES— I SEE NOW. THEY TOOK ALICE, MY GIRL. ALICE! STAR, YOU MUST DO SOMETHING!
ALICE? YOUR DAUGHTER, EH? WELL GET HER PROF. I HEARD 'EM MENTION THE FAIR!

SOME TIME LATER AS PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER GALAXY BEGIN GATHER AT THE UNIVERSAL HUB THE AL JILO AND HIS MEN SET UP THEIR EXHIBITION PLATFORM IN THE GREAT HALL.

GATHER AROUND HERE! YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE THE GREATEST THE MOST MIRACULOUS WONDER OF THE AGE! SOMETHING THAT WILL BENEFIT EACH AND EVERYONE OF YOU!

BEHOLD! AMALGAMATED ELECTRONICS PRESENTS ALICE AND ALICIA! ONE OF THESE IS A HUMAN BEING— THE OTHER A PRODUCT OF SCIENCE!
WHICH TWIN IS THE REAL ONE?

THE ALICIAS GIVE AN AMAZING DEMONSTRATION OF THE STRANGE TWINS—ALIKE IN EVERY FEATURE, EVEN NOW—START TOWARD EACH OTHER WITH FLASHING ELECTRIC ARCS...

MARVELOUS! IT'S THE ONE ON THE LEFT!
NO! THE ONE ON THE RIGHT!
I-I'M NOT SURE!
YOU CAN BE SURE OF ONE THING, BUG, AMALGAMATED WILL TAKE THE GRAND PRIZE FOR THIS!

JUST OUTSIDE THE MAIN HALL...
IT'S A GOOD THING THE PROF GAVE US THE REAL PITCH ON THIS THING! C'MON, THESE DISGUISES OUGHT TO GET US INSIDE
PSST! HEY! G'AR HERE COMES THE GUARDIAN OF THE GATE!
HOLD ON BUB! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
ONE SIDE! WE'RE GOING TO SET UP THE MARTIAN EXHIBIT
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK! TAKE THAT BOA OUT OF HERE AND DON'T COME BACK!
AW! HE'S NO GUARD - HE WAS ONE OF THOSE GUYS WHO RAIDED THE LAB I'D KNOW THAT MAN ANYWHERE!
DEAN BLACKLY - LET'S GO GOOD! LOST MY BALANCE!
LOOK OUT! YOU FOOL! THAT BOA - IT'S GOING TO CRASH!
G'AR, THE LIZARDONS ARE GETTING AWAY! HEY YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE!
OF COURSE I DID GAP! HOW ELSE COULD WE GET IN?
FRANTICALLY THE WEIRD BAT WINGED CREATURES WHEEL AND SWOOP AMONGST THE TERRIFIED SPECTATORS
WHAT THE-! THE WHOLE PLACE IS IN CONFUSION! THESE LIZARDONS ARE SOME TRICK! QUICKLY NOW WE'LL CATCH THE CULPR

NOW, AS THE CONFUSION REIGNS ITS AFOR...
I'VE GOT ER STAR CHARR BABY!
NO NO! THAT'S NOT THE ONE! LET HER GO!
AH! THIS 'I' NOW TO FOLLOW THE POLE'S INSTRUCTIONS SO YOU SAID! TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REAL THING AND A ROBOT, EH, ROMEO?
NOBODY EVER TELLS ME ANYTHING! I KNOW ONE WAS A ROBOT! HEY STAR-LOOK U-
THANKS, BLACAT! I GUESS I'LL JUST TAKE TO THE AIR VIA MY ANTI-GRAV BOOTS!
WHAT? HE'S TAKING OFF! DOUSE THE LIGHTS, GARA— QUICKLY!
RIGHT, PILO! HE'LL NEVER GET AWAY IN THE DARKNESS!
HEY! WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS?
OUCH!
GREAT PILO, I'VE GOT 'EM! SWITCH ON THE LIGHTS!
GOOD WORK, BOYS, I— WHAT? BOOTS, BOOTS! THAT'S NOT STAR PIRATE!
WHY, IT'S HIS PAL! LISTEN— THAT VOICE
HI, PILO! DID YOU TELL THESE POLES THAT I'D STOLE A LIFE "THE ROBOT" FROM PROFESSOR UREE?
LET'S GET 'IM! I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS, STAR PIRATE!

NOW TO FOLLOW STEP NUMBER TWO OF THE PROF'S INSTRUCTIONS- THAT OF OPERATING THIS MASTER CONTROL SWITCH!
HEY! WHAT'S HAPPENING, PILOT THIS DUMMY'S STARTING TO MOVE!
AND INSTANTLY, ALICE THE ROBOT, SWINGS INTO ACTION...
PILOT! YOUR BLASTER- STOP THAT THING... UGH!
BUT EVEN BEFORE THE FIRST BLASTER CAN BE DRAWN
PARA-RAYS! AHHH!
THEN SWIFTLY
I'LL ESCAPE NOW WHILE I- WHAT! THE THING'S GOT EXTENSION ARMS, GRABBING ME!
LATER...
HOORAY FOR TUREK! MY WIFE'LL WANT FIVE ALICE ROBOTS TO DO THE HOUSE-WORK!
BUT-BUT I ASSURE YOU, I- I MADE ALICE BECAUSE I WAS SO LONELY I CAN'T
TUT TUT, PROFESSOR! YOU CAN BUILD MORE ALICES WITH THIS FIRST PRIZE MONEY!
AND SOON
WELL, WELL! THIS'LL PUT A MALGAMATED ELECTRONICS WHERE IT BELONGS- BEHIND BARS, EH STARR!
RIGHT! EVERYTHING THEY EVER PRODUCED WAS SOMETHING THEY STOLE FROM SOME UNFORTUNATE GENIUS LIKE PROFESSOR TUREK
STAR PIRATE IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!!

THE MOON FELL DOWN

by LEE BULMER

GERTRUDE had been after me to take her to the Planetarium for a long time, and so I finally gave in. It was a hot night in July, and they were having a show telling people how the world might end some day. Ever since she was just a kid Gertrude had been interested in the world ending, and though I told her often enough that she was morbid, and had a tendency toward unhealthy thoughts, I always had to admit that it—the world ending — was pretty fascinating stuff. If you didn't think too much about it! Anyway, what with the atom bomb and all, it gave me kind of a chill to think that we might be a lot closer to the end of the world than most people thought.

So to get back to this hot night in July. After I tried to talk Gertrude into going to see Bob Hope, and failed, we went to the Planetarium. At least it was air conditioned, and they had a little spot in the basement, and after a drink, upon which I insisted, we went upstairs and into the huge room they had fixed up to represent the cosmos, or the firmament, or whatever you want to call it.

Gertrude was really excited. She grabbed my arm and squealed so hard that it got us a couple of shushes and dirty looks from people who looked like the world had ended for them a long time ago

"Look," Gertrude said. "Just look at that, Harry! They've got the moon and the sun and all the planets—right up there in that artificial sky. Gee, ain't it wonderful?"

Well, I didn't gush like she did, but it was pretty wonderful. The whole cosmic scheme was laid out as neat as you please. And when we took our seats, and got comfortable, the lecturer started to tell us how the world might end. He was a good talker and he made things pretty clear. I was enjoying it, and I looked over at Gertrude and saw that she was too. She already had her shoes off, and was drinking in every word the man said

Pretty soon, though, I felt myself getting fuzzy. Sort of nodding and wanting to drop off to sleep. It had been a hard day at the plant, and hot as sin, and I was beat. Even at that, it didn't seem like I'd dozed for more than five minutes when Gertrude poked me, with a hard look in her eye, and said it was time to go. Sure enough, she had her shoes back on, and the lecturer had stopped talking about the world ending, and was just standing there on his little platform looking sort of bored. I guess even the end of the world can get to be old stuff—if you have to talk about it every day to a bunch of droops that go to sleep on you.

We stepped out into the street and it was like walking into one of Carnegie's steel furnaces. Sweat started to dribble down my back and soak through my shirt. And Gertrude was mad.

"A fine thing," she said, "Going to sleep while that nice man was trying to tell you all about the world ending. Gee, Harry, don't you ever want to learn anything? Except maybe did the Dodgers win today? I was so ashamed of you."

It was too hot to argue, and I let that pass. Anyway, I'd just noticed something mighty funny. All around us people had stopped on the sidewalk and were staring up into the sky. Most of them had funny looks on their faces—half puzzled and half scared. As though they couldn't make up their minds whether to laugh or cry—or maybe scream. Pretty soon I ask a guy what's cooking.

He points with a hand that shakes a little. "It's the moon," he says. "It's acting funny. Getting bigger or something. See how plain you can see the mountains now. And the air is all full of dust, too. Big black clouds of it."

He was right. The air was full of dust, and it was getting hotter. Downtown, all around the top of the Empire State building, there was a funny looking black cloud. And the moon *did* look bigger. Sort of like you were looking at it through a telescope—only we didn't have a telescope. Gertrude and I looked for a time, with the rest of them, and listened to the chatter, and then a cop came along and said to break up the crowd.

Gertrude grabbed my arm and we hurried off, but not before I noticed that something was wrong with that cop. He was big and Irish, only he didn't have a red face. He was white and I sort of got the idea he was afraid of something

As we started up the steps of our brownstone, Gertrude grabbed me again. "Look," Harry! The moon is bigger now. Oh, Harry, I'm frightened! See—it looks like it fills most of the sky. Oh—what's happening?"

By now I know something is wrong, but I don't let on to her yet. I tell her that she is seeing things, that the show she has just

seen is upsetting her, and to remember how Orson Welles got the whole country on its ear one time with a broadcast about men from Mars. We are not going to be suckers like that, I tell her. If the moon looks bigger it is just some kind of an illusion, and nothing to be afraid of. I don't admit that I am getting pretty nervous myself.

When we get into the house, Gertrude bustles around and pulls down all the shades so we can't see out into the street. She keeps talking all the time about the man at the Planetarium, and about how he said that one of the ways the world can end is for the moon to fall toward the Earth, maybe to smash into it and kill us all, or maybe just to cause a lot of huge tidal waves and storms, and so kill everyone that way. Pretty soon she gets on my nerves, talking like that, and I tell her to shut up. Funny thing, but she does shut up, and goes into the bedroom and closes the door.

Then I did what I had been wanting to do ever since we came home, and what I knew Gertrude had wanted to do, only both of us had been afraid to do it. I walked over to the radio and switched it on and the man's voice came into the room.

". . . the President has just called an emergency meeting of the Cabinet. We expect a bulletin any moment. All Army and Navy forces are standing by for orders. Earlier, in a plea direct from the White House, the President asked that all citizens be as calm as possible, that they stay in their homes and off the streets. He promised that everything possible will be done, although, and I quote, 'we are all in the hands of the Almighty now'. End quote."

I spun through the stations on the dial. All of them squawked and sputtered the same story. Then I got a guy speaking from some observatory in California, some sort of professor with a voice like chilled cream. As I listen to him I notice that, although I'm still sweating, the sweat is cold now. Outside in the street I can hear sirens, and something else that sounds like wind blowing. Only I never heard wind blow like that before, shaking the whole house, and squirting little puffs of black dust in through the cracks of the window. I'm not really scared now, but sort of numb, and for a minute I think how funny it is, but true, that most people won't be afraid of dying—not if it is going to happen to everyone at once.

The professor on the radio is saying: "We can only guess at the causes of this phenomenon. In layman's parlance, somewhere in the cosmos a cog has slipped, and the moon has left its orbit and is falling, if that term can be applied, toward the earth. It is doubtful that moon will strike the earth. This, however, will not make the slightest difference to any of us. Hurricanes and tidal waves will undoubtedly have killed us all in a few hours. Probably the seas will be displaced and will pour inland, inundating everything to a depth of several hundred feet. This will be accompanied by winds which will reach a velocity of thousands of miles an hour. Again none of this will matter much to us . . ."

I turned him off. What a character! Yakking like that—like he was telling a class of college kids what might happen. I ran around the dial again and got a man telling about thousands of people committing suicide. Not for me, buddy, I say. I'll take my chances with those tidal waves! Then I hear a bishop praying on the air, and after he finishes I feel better.

Finally I go to the bedroom door, but hesitate with my hand on the knob. Gertrude is in there, asleep, and I've got to tell her what I've heard. For a minute I stand there and think of the good times we've had together, and how she never loved anyone but me, and I know that if the world is ending—as I know it it—I'm lucky because I've got my wife and we can face it together . . .

Suddenly someone is shaking me. I open my eyes and I'm in the Planetarium. So help me, I've been dreaming. Gertrude is glaring at me and I see that she has her shoes on and is ready to leave. I start to tell her about my dream, but then I figure it will be better to wait until later. So we go outside where it is like a blast furnace. But am I glad to feel that humidity. The sweat running down me feels good, and I take deep breaths of that muggy New York air.

Gertrude says: "A fine thing. Going to sleep while that nice man was trying to tell you all about the world ending. Gee, Harry, don't you ever want to . . ."

"Be quiet," I tell her. I'm looking at the guy on the sidewalk just in front of us. He's staring up at the sky.

"The moon," he says. "It's getting bigger!"

I don't want to turn and look downtown, at the Empire State building, but I do. I've just got to. And there is a big black cloud around it and as I look I hear a siren somewhere off in the city. And then a cop with a white face was telling us to move on.

THE END

FUTURA

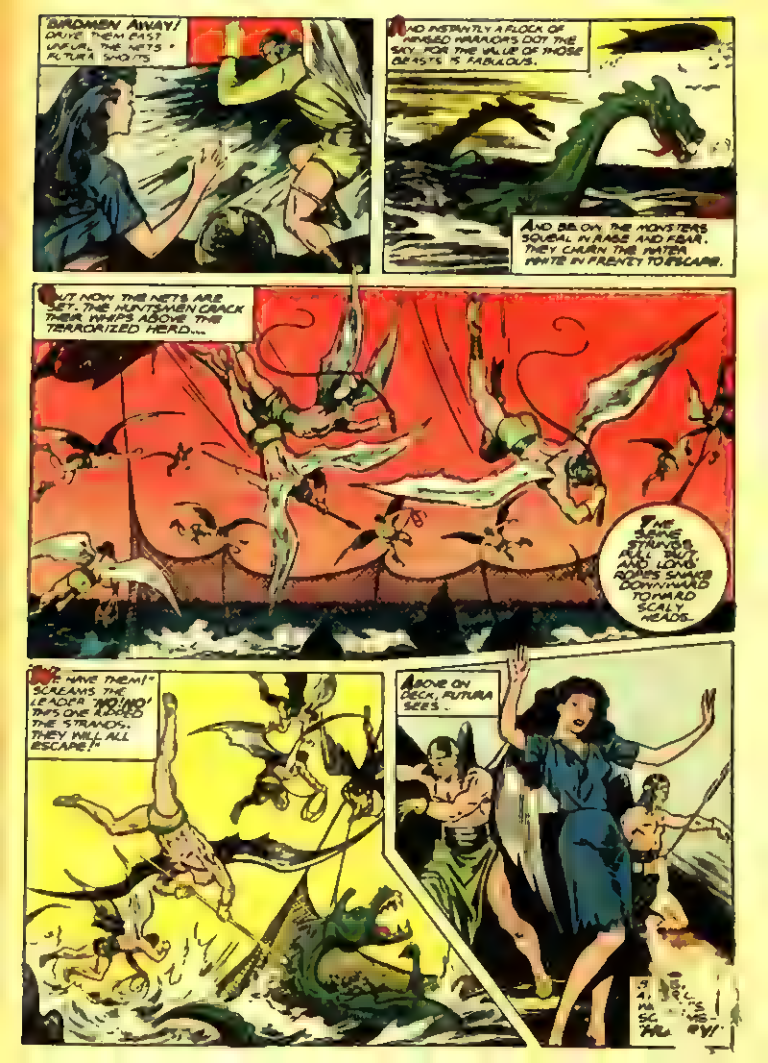
BY JOHN DOUGLAS

"FUTURA STILL ELUDES JUSTICE. PIRACY THE CHARGE!" CHANTS THE SPACE OFFICER'S VOICE FROM THE VIDEO. AND THE EARTH-GIRL, NEWLY CROWNED MARINER QUEEN, TURNS ASIDE, "SOMEDAY I WILL CLEAR MY NAME," SHE SIGHS. THEN HER ORDER REVERBRATES THE CRUISER'S CABIN, "FULL SPEED AHEAD TO MY NEW KINGDOM! GO!"

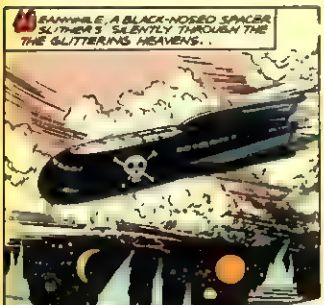
AND INSTANTLY, THE ANCIENT CRAFT STREAKS SKYWARD, OCEANIA AND ITS DREARY WATER WASTES FAST FADING IN ITS WAKE. BUT KARTEL, SON OF THE ILL FATED LEADER, WATCHES THROUGH SLITTED EYES FUTURA'S EVERY MOVE...

"SHE DETHRONED MY FATHER AND USURPED HIS POWER." HE MURMURS, "SO SHE TOO MUST DIE!"

ON SPEEDS THE CRAFT... PAST COMETS AND CONSTELLATIONS. THEN SUDDENLY, WHILE SKIMMING OVER A TINY PLANETOID, THE LOOKOUT CRIES, "SEA HORSES BELOW! ALL HANDS ON DECK!"

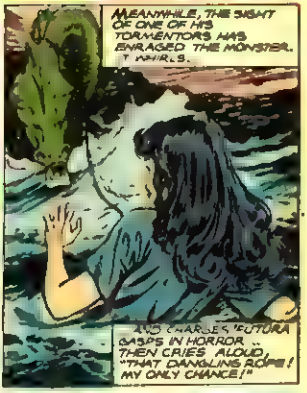

BIRDMEN AWAY! DRIVE THEM FAST UNFUL THE NETS - FUTURA SHOUTS
AND INSTANTLY A FLOCK OF WINGED HARPIES DOT THE SKY. FOR THE VALUE OF THOSE BEASTS IS FABULOUS.
AND SO ON THE MONSTERS SQUEAL IN RAGE AND FEAR. THEY CHARGE THE PATTERN WHITE IN FRENZY TO ESCAPE.
BUT NOW THE NETS ARE SET. THE HUNTSMEN CRACK THEIR WHIPS ABOVE THE TERRORIZED HERD...
THE LARGE STRAYS FALL TRY AND LONG ROPES SNAKE DOWNWARD TOWARD SCALY HEADS.
"WE HAVE THEM!" SCREAMS THE LEADER "NO! NO! THAT ONE ADDED THE STRAYS... THEY WILL ALL ESCAPE!"
ABOVE ON DECK, FUTURA SEES.
SHE SCREAMS!

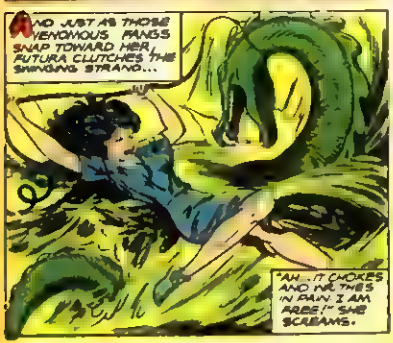
SOME PAIR OF THINGS COMING UP. KARTEL CALLS LOUDLY... GROWLINGS OUT THE SOUND OF RIPPING CLOTH...
SHE SWAY... HER HEAD SPINS, AND I MY REVENGE," HE MURMURS AS HE SHEATHES HIS BLADE
"HERE, FUTURA, LET ME GRAB THEM ON-
"MOST KIND OF YOU, KARTEL BUT BE FAST OUR MEN NEED HELP!"
AT A DOME SHE TURNS AND KARTEL PLUNGES BESIDE HER
THE UNREAL ONE BALKS IT WILL KILL THE HUNTER AND STRAIGHT TOWARD IT SHE DIVES
AT AS HER SPEAR HURTS TOWARD THE MONSTER BEAST SHE HEARS THE SICKENING SOUND OF RENDING FABRIC FALLS HELPLESS IN THE MONSTER'S PATH
"HOLD FAST! I WILL FEED IT INTO SUBMISSION" SHE CALLS ENCOURAGEMENT


MEANWHILE, A BLACK-NOSED SPACER SLITHERS SILENTLY THROUGH THE THE GLITTERING HEAVENS..

AND INSTANTLY THE CUTTHROAT CREW CROWD BEFORE THE VIDEO, "AH, A FISHING SHIP," THE CHIEF CRIES...

..."AND TRYING TO CORRAL SEA HORSES. OUR KNIVES WILL SERVE THEIR PURPOSE BEFORE THEY WAKE UP TO OUR PRESENCE. ATTACK!" HE ORDERS.


MEANWHILE, THE SIGHT OF ONE OF HIS TORMENTORS HAS ENRAGED THE MONSTER. T WHIRLS.
AND CHARLES 'FUTURA GASPS IN HORROR... THEN CRIES ALOUD, "THAT DANGLING ROPE! MY ONLY CHANCE!"


AND JUST AS THOSE VENOMOUS FANGS SNAP TOWARD HER, FUTURA CLUTCHES THE SWINGING STRAND...
"AH.. IT CHOKES AND I'M THIS IN PAIN! I AM FREE!" SHE SCREAMS.

AND ABOVE, A CREWMAN POINTS, "OUR QUEEN IS IN PERIL! WE MUST SAVE HER!"
AND KARTEL GROANS IN FEIGNED SYMPATHY, "TOO LATE... SHE DIES! LISTEN! WHO CALLS?"

ALL IS SILENT FOR A SECOND, THEN AGAIN COMES THE CRY, "STAND BY TO BOARD!"
IT IS THE VOICE OF THE RENEGADE...
...FOR, UNNOTICED THE PIRATE CRAFT HAS CREPT BESIDE THE FISHERMAN'S SHIP.
...AND THE CUTTHROAT BAND CROWD THE LANDING DECK.
"FOLLOW ME--DEATH TO ALL WHO DARE STRIKE BACK!" THE BRIGAND CHIEF FLOURISHES HIS SWORD AND LEAPS...
AND INSTANTLY, CHAOS! FEEBLY, THE FISHERMEN RALLY TO MEET THE INVADERS..
...BUT THE ODDS ARE TOO GREAT... THE SURPRISE TOO SUDDEN.
MEANWHILE, BELOW, FUTURA CLINGS TO THE THRESHING BEAST IN A WILD ATTEMPT TO ELUDE ITS GNASHING JAWS...
"THAT ROPE DANGLING FROM THE SHIP... IF ONLY I CAN GRASP IT," SHE PANTS.
"AH... I HAVE IT! I CAN CLIMB TO SAFETY!"
AND UP SHE STRUGGLES... HAND OVER HAND AND FINALLY REACHES THE SHIP'S DECK... "WHY NO REACHING HANDS TO HELP?" SHE QUESTIONS...
THEN HESITATES AS SHE SEES THE VICTORIOUS PIRATES DICTATING TERMS TO HER FOLLOWERS. BUT SUDDENLY SOMEONE GRABS HER...
15

...AND PUSHES HER TOWARD THE CHIEF. "COME HERE, GIRL!" HE SHOUTS, "YOU ARE MY PRIZE!" BUT FUTURA WRENCHES FROM HIS IRON GRASP...
A SUDDEN TWIST AS MUSCLES FLEX...A CRY OF PAIN AND SHOCK... AND THE PIRATE CHIEF FINDS HIMSELF SPINNING THROUGH THE AIR.
"FIGHT, MARINERS, FIGHT TO THE DEATH!" SHE SCREAMS, AND SNATCHING UP A WEAPON, HURLS HERSELF AT THE BRIGAND CREW.
HER FEAR-CRAZED MEN RALLY TO HER SIDE, AND NOW IT IS THE PIRATES SHOUTING, "HOLD, ENOUGH!"
"THE VICTORY IS WON! HAIL TO FUTURA! HAIL TO OUR QUEEN!" STIRRING SHOUTS ECHO THE CABIN.
AND ALL ARE HAPPY...EXCEPT THE VEXED KARTEL. HE WATCHES FUTURA'S TRIUMPH, AND EVIL THOUGHTS RACE THROUGH HIS MIND..."LATER, EARTHGIRL...I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE LATER!"
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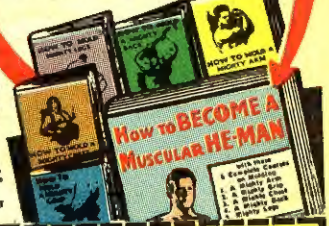
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